REMARKS

In the Office Action dated March 23, 2007, the Examiner rejected claim 1-23 under 35 USC 103 as obvious over RFC791: Internet Protocol-DARPA Internet Program Protocol Specification (hereafter RFC791) and the "applicant's disclosure of prior art". Claims 1-23 remain at issue.

The Art Rejection

The Examiner has rejected the claims as obvious over RFC191 and the discussion of the state of the Fibre Channel art as provided in the Background of the Invention of the current application. The Applicants strongly disagree. The Examiner has failed to demonstrate a prime facie case of obviousness.

The RFC791 reference teaches on page 12 of 50 that fragmentation is required when large packets need to traverse a local network that allows only packets of a smaller size. In the rejection of claim 1, the Examiner states "*RFC791 does not implicitly teach that the messages that are fragmented are specifically "authentication" messages.*" Since the claims of the present application are directed to transmitting authenticated messages, not packets of data, by the Examiner's own admission the RFC791 reference is not material.

Paragraphs [0002]-[0005] of the present application discuss, in general, the use of the Fibre Channel protocol in a Fibre Channel switching Fabric and specifically the need for the authentication of certain types of message, i.e., for security purposes. In paragraph [0006], three types of authentication protocols are defined, including DH-CHAP, SRP, and FCAP. Regardless of the protocol used, the messages tend to be large.

Device to device communication, or device to Fabric communication, in a Fibre Channel networks typically occur over Extended Link Services (ELSs). Most commercially available devices, however, can support only a simplified form of ELS and are incapable of handling large messages. This is a problem because often authentication messages tend to be very large. The Applicants have solved this problem by (i) ascertaining if the length of an authentication messages ***exceeds the length supported by the target entity*** in a switching Fabric; and (ii) fragmenting the message ***if its length exceeds that supported by the target entity***.

Even if it were proper to combine the two references, it still would not yield the present invention as claimed. The RFC reference teaches the segmenting of large packets into smaller packets to accommodate a low bandwidth local network. The Background of the present invention teaches the use of various known authentication protocols so that an entity in a Fibre channel switching Fabric can identify or verify itself to other entities in the Fabric. The combination would therefore yield the segmenting of authentication protocols into smaller packets so that the packets can traverse a low bandwidth network.

This combination, however, does not teach or suggest the present invention as claimed. The claims cover (i) ascertaining if the authentication message has a length that exceeds the message length ***supported by a target entity***; and either (ii) fragmenting the authentication message into message fragments if the length of the message exceeds the message length ***supported by the target entity*** and sequentially sending the message fragments one by one across the Fabric; or (iii) sending the authentication message in its entirety if the length of the authentication message is less than the message length ***supported by the target entity***.

There is absolutely no teaching or suggestion whatsoever in either reference for ascertaining or determining if a message is too large to be received by a ***target entity***. On the contrary, the RFC791 reference is only concerned about the bandwidth of the network itself, not any devices or entities attached to the network. Since neither reference teaches or suggests ascertaining the ability of a ***target entity*** to process or not process an authentication message, the proposed combination, even if proper, still does not teach the present invention as claimed.

The Applicants further submit that the Examiner's rejection is improper for several additional reasons. The RFC791 reference is directed to segmenting large packets into smaller packets so they can be sent over a local network of limited bandwidth. In other words, RFC791 addresses bandwidth. In contrast, the Background of the present invention discusses the authenticating messages for security purposes. There is absolutely no motivation, teaching or suggestion whatsoever, in either of the reference, to combine the two. The two teachings address completely different concerns. There is no reason why one skilled in the art would look to combine the two. Instead, the Examiner has improperly combined the two teachings in hindsight, using the application as a "roadmap", to find the claims obvious.

Applicants believe that all pending claims have been amended and the case is now in a condition for allowance. The Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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